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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to help five bright but underachieving fourth grade students in four classes regain their enthusiasm for learning through a multi-pronged approach with parents, students, classroom teachers, and specialists. Two workshops on learning styles and differentiated instruction were held for classroom teachers. Communication with parents involved meetings and monthly phone links. Students received lessons in affective education, study skills, and personal responsibility. Mentoring and counseling were important program components. Acceptance by the gifted enrichment program of responsibility for not only highly able achieving students but also highly able underachieving students was one of the practicum's achievements. Other evaluation data suggested that the practicum resulted in increased use of differentiated instruction by classroom teachers and increased use of alternate assignments to accommodate divergent learning styles. Evaluation data from parents suggested improved student self-esteem and increased accountability in students who had been alienated from academics. Appendices include the teacher self-report forms on use of differentiated studies and divergent learning styles, the agenda used in the parent meeting, a questionnaire on students' feelings about school, the agenda for the teacher workshops, the parents' evaluation survey, and other forms. (Contains 25 references.) (DB)

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ED 386 834

Establishing a Program to Service Underachieving Bright Students in the Fourth Grade

Josephine T. Eicher

Cluster 65

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University

1995

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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May 17, 1995

This practicum report was submitted by Josephine Eicher under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

June 17, 1995
Date of Final Approval of Report

Ann E. Fordham
Ann E. Fordham, Ed.D., Advisor

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To the parents and students, I humbly acknowledge my sincere gratitude for your participation. Home and school form a powerful educational link to benefit the children.

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Abstract

Establishing a Program to Service Underachieving Bright Students in the Fourth Grade. Eicher, Josephine T., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Academic Achievement/Academic Failure/At-Risk Students/Differentiation/Elementary Education/Enrichment/Gifted/High Ability Students/High Risk Students/Individualized Instruction/Learning Disabilities/Learning Motivation/Learning Styles/Parent Participation/Program Development/Student Attitudes/Underachievement.

This practicum was created to help bright underachieving students regain their enthusiasm for the learning process. This was accomplished by enlisting the cooperation and aid of parents, students, classroom teachers, and specialists. Two workshops were provided for the classroom teachers in learning styles and differentiated studies. Parents gave support in the form of attendance at initial meetings, through monthly phone links, and final evaluations at the close of the program. Students received lessons in affective education, study skills, and personal responsibility. Mentoring and counseling were important components.

Analysis of the data provided insight into rebuilding self-esteem and accountability in students who had turned their backs on their own academics. With cooperative effort, all stakeholders have learned a lesson in the importance of providing an education for each child.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community associated with this report is located in the mountainous northwestern corner of an Atlantic coastal state. It encompasses 40 square miles of rural terrain. The township is divided into two diverse geographic areas by a unique mountain range that is considered a piedmont to the Appalachians. The socioeconomic condition of the citizens living in the southern section is considered lower-middle class. Since this area was once a recreational lake community, the small homes are mostly converted summer bungalows. Those living north of the mountains enjoy the socioeconomic rating of the upper middle class. Recent construction on both ends of the township has been changing farm land into modern developments. Each large home sits on large lots, or several acres of land. They house white collar, mid-level and upper-level executives. This interesting mix often causes heated discourse in the governing of the township and the operation of the schools.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is the teacher of the academically advanced students and an Enrichment Specialist for grades 3, 4 and 5. Students identified as academically advanced

are taught in homogenous, pull-out classes. Eighty-one youngsters are serviced in this program. Those students with proven math abilities are enriched via the Mathematical Olympiads for Elementary Schools. Two teams, totaling 72 pupils, are coached each week. This writer has coached three international silver medalists and an international gold medalist over the last five years. Ninety students with an interest in science are enriched via three weekly Young Astronaut chapter meetings. This writer is a certified instructor, facilitating students in Junior Great Books. Approximately 80 children participate annually in this advanced literature program. All general population students (about 700) participate in a program of directed higher order thinking skills called created by this writer. It is called Project Challenge. Most of the curricula in the programs are developed by this writer without the aid of a committee.

All administrative procedures associated with the identification and testing of students for entry into the gifted or enrichment programs (with the exception of Project Challenge) are the responsibility of this writer. This includes identification, testing, and profiling the nominees. Notification to parents and arranging conferences when necessary. The scheduling of all programs is of major concern each Fall. Tracking each participating student and reviewing the records of ineligible students are important tasks for the end of each term.

For the purpose of this practicum, one school was chosen for implementation of a program to service the underachieving gifted child. This school is in the southern part of the township. It houses approximately 350 youngsters in grades 3, 4 and 5. Those involved in the project include the principal, all fourth grade teachers, the student assistant counselor (SAC), parents, the identified students, and the teacher of the gifted.

Writer's Qualifications

The qualifications of the writer as the teacher of academically advanced students and enrichment specialist can be documented. Graduate studies at a well known university earned this writer membership into the national honor society of Phi Kappa Phi, which pledges each member to professional excellence. This writer holds a Master of Education in Curriculum and Teaching with a focus on gifted education, and has an additional 15 hours of course work in a Master of Arts program for guidance and counseling focused on the needs of gifted children. Graduate credits in the Educational Psychology of the gifted were earned during a summer institute coordinated by Dr. Joseph Renzulli at the University of Connecticut's Research Center of the Gifted.

Six years were spent as a fifth grade classroom teacher, while the last fifteen years were in the field of gifted education. Organizational activities concern advocacy for the gifted child. A member in a Consortium of Teachers of the Gifted, this writer participated in their workshops, seminars and had been the group's treasurer. The writer is a member of the State's Association for Teachers of the Gifted and has participated in Gifted Institutes at two universities. The writer is a successful workshop presented for elementary school teachers in the area of hands-on science in which a non-textbook approach is advocated.

Awards received for curriculum excellence are:

1988 U.S. Bicentennial Commendation, Historical Curriculum

1990 State Monitors Commendation, Affective Education

1991 A+ for Kids, Master teacher in science education

1992 Geraldine R. Dodge Award, Fellowship in Gifted Education

1992 Rudolph Research Award for Scientific Excellence, Chemistry

1993 Rudolph Research Award for Scientific Excellence, Cardiology

1994 Rudolph Research Award for Scientific Excellence, Physics

1994 State Board of Education - Leadership Award, Nominee

1995 Rudolph Research Award for Scientific Excellence, Aerodynamics

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

There are several forms of giftedness recognized by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for the Gifted and Talented (1980). Among them can be found those with potential in the creative arts, leadership and general academic abilities. Most gifted programs this writer has observed seem to address only general academic abilities. Students who meet requirements set by individual districts are identified as gifted and serviced with a program that nurtures their across-the-board talents. However, many bright youngsters do not meet these academic requirements. They are not identified as gifted and are therefore excluded from the services they need. The profession has terms or phrases that describe these youngsters. They are called the *closet gifted*, the *hidden gifted*, the *lazy child*, or the *child that never works up to his/her potential*. For this practicum, these learners will be referred to as the *underachieving bright children*. These students can be found in every school room. They will score well on standardized tests, but seldom shine in daily classroom achievement. In fact, classroom teachers may describe these learners as day dreamers, quiet, troublemakers, or slow. Their obvious behaviors hide their true potential and make it difficult to address their needs. After fifteen years of profiling students and selecting participants for gifted classes, this writer

knows that a serious problem exists. In servicing only children in the general academic category, the teaching profession does not adequately address the educational needs of the underachieving bright child. The entrance criteria exclude underachieving bright children from access to the advanced program. Conversely, when youngsters selected for the gifted program withdraw because of poor class performance, they seldom receive services to help them deal with the situation. Since a program component is not in place that would assist these bright youngsters to achieve their full potential, many begin to hide their intelligence in an attempt to be average or ordinary.

In summary then, the problem is that there is no program in place that would service the needs of the underachieving bright student in the fourth grade.

Problem Documentation

Evidence that advances the existence of the problem is corroborated by a review of the Board of Education's current description of the enrichment program and its criteria (1994). There is no mention of services for the underachieving bright student. In the past ten years (1984-1994) teachers have not had an in-service workshop addressing the underachieving bright student. This can be documented by the writer's personal workshop notes taken at time of delivery. A review of established curriculum guides for grade four show no suggested strategy for use with underachieving bright children; neither do they address the use of affective education as a technique to ameliorate the problem.

Verbal self-reports from the four, fourth grade teachers imply that differentiated studies are directed toward the underachieving bright student less than ten minutes a day. Differentiated studies are not constantly used with the underachieving bright student.

All four grade level teachers reported being aware of divergent learning styles, yet

only one consistently addresses them when teaching the underachieving bright child as reported in interviews.

Self-reports concerning differentiated studies (see Appendix A) and another addressing divergent learning styles (see Appendix B) were administered before implementation. These results will be evaluated against the self-reports administered at the end of the implementation. Three out of four, fourth grade teachers do not regularly use differentiated studies and learning styles according to the initial self-reports.

A review of District curriculum shows that the affective domain is not incorporated into classroom units. None of the four, fourth grade teachers reported consciously addressing affective skills with the underachieving bright student.

Causative Analysis

Causes of the problem are difficult to reveal. The problems of the underachieving bright child are complex due to multiple issues. Many issues are camouflaged so well by these youngsters that they go unnoticed or are misjudged by the teaching professional.

The fact that the students may not acknowledge their own potential is a primary cause contributing to the problem of servicing underachieving bright students.

Psychological conflicts that are found within the child (Whitmore, 1986), negatively impact their school work. First, their interpersonal skills may be underdeveloped. This will negatively impact the affective domain causing social conflicts with teachers, family, and/or peers of these children. Second, contrary to the myth of the egotistical bright child, emotional conflicts stemming from acute sensitivities give these youngsters feelings of low self-worth. Lower self-esteem is frequently observed and may be the drive behind their need to pursue perfectionism, or turn from trying to achieve at

any level. Excellence, not perfection, must be the focus. Low self-esteem/low self-worth is found within the gifted child (Connell & Davis, 1985). This reduces the ability to take risks with new concepts that can cause underachievement. Third, rote and unchallenging work assigned by authoritative teachers can kill any desire to learn. In the teaching profession, this style of teaching is often called *drill and kill.* This teaching style, coupled with an ignorance of divergent learning styles, negatively impacts the academic progress of bright underachievers. This is a type of child abuse. Each child should receive an education appropriate for them — not for the majority. Social/emotional conflicts, boring academic environments, and authoritative teachers are among the causes (Gleason, 1988) of underachievement of gifted students that should be addressed.

A secondary cause contributing to the problem of underachieving bright students involves society's attitudes. Society allocates its financial resources with a view of the short term over the long term. School systems are microsocieties. When financially strapped, they dedicate monies to the federally mandated classes rather than the optional quality-of-life classes. Many art, music, and gifted programs have been trimmed or eliminated in depressed economic times. Instituting a new program that would service the unique needs of underachieving bright children is not seen as a viable budget item.

Local budget concerns also cause problems for gifted programs. For example, at the height of Federal funding, 1970-1980, this writer's state allocated two cents out of every $100 spent on education to gifted programs. "Budget crises and opposition to programs have led [to program cuts in many other states] . . . and have tended to fall unevenly on programs for gifted . . . students" (O'Connell-Ross, 1993, p. 18).

The last cause is perhaps the most sinister. It involves a reverse discrimination that stands in direct opposition to the American Dream. It is society's view that any

program developed for the gifted child is elitist. The basic skills child is taught to reach full potential. The average student is taught to dream and strive for the goal. This support does not, however, transfer to the gifted student. A program to help reach his/her full potential is seen as elitist; a class where dreams are achieved by striving for the goal is not encouraged. The result is that America is not enriching its best resources. Education is in need of total systemic reform.

A primary cause for the lack of programming is this myth of elitism. The American ethic dictates "equal treatment and expectations for all." Yet, equal treatment is unfair and contrary to the American "premise that the common person has the right to become uncommon according to his ability" (Webb et al., 1985, p. 206).

The myth that the gifted are smart enough to go it alone must also be set aside. An accountable program to challenge the underachieving bright student during their school years should be addressed.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Literature reveals that the causes of the problem of underachievement for the gifted have many levels. When a student is seen as not working up to projected expectations, the inclination is to attach the label of *lazy* to the child or assume the child has an attitude. This easy solution does not value the person nor does it accurately describe the situation. Without a clear identification of the condition, problem-solving cannot take place. This occurs within the gifted as well as the general school population. "Causes...are usually complex and rarely found in isolation" (Gleason, 1988, p. 22).

The metacognitive process of a gifted student can and does work against him/her in finding solutions. If success comes easily, the student has little satisfaction with the

work and classifies it as babyish. If the work is difficult for the bright student, the risk is to be embarrassed or to be known as stupid. Therefore, it is often avoided. Many basic assignments become impossible because of their intrinsic metacognitive desire for complexity. A circle of underachievement is then formed. It can't be done, therefore it proves stupidity; being stupid, much of this work will not be done (Hannel, 1990).

The gifted student experiences the same social and emotional problems of his/her classmates. This child may exhibit "feelings of insecurity . . . expressed [via] anxieties that are directly related to the age group." Feelings of frustration may be seen in "undesirable social or personal behavior" (Christianson, Hoffman & Wasson, 1985, p. 12). The gifted student will parrot others by saying that he/she is stupid, lazy, ugly, easily distracted, disorganized, has no friends, or that he/she dreams in class. This may cause poor school attendance, which negatively impacts on achievement.

Causes of underachievement in the gifted child can be subdivided into three areas of concern. The first is *Social and Emotional Conflict.* This area includes latent messages to girls that it is not acceptable to show that they may be cognitively brighter then male classmates. It also includes family problems that may manifest themselves by having the bright child become "lethargic, disenchanted, distant and unmotivated" (Gleason, 1988, p. 21). This area includes myths about the gifted having uncontrolled egos, not needing any special programs that are perceived as elitist, and name calling, which is demeaning. The second area is *Academic Environment.* The physical setting has the "least causal effect on underachievement" (Gleason, 1988, p. 22). However, the physical plant as well as curriculum can "inhibit . . . attaining [personal] potential" and "ineffectual teaching methods and practices [will] squelch creative, intellectually superior thinking" (Gleason, 1988, p. 22). The third area is *Physiological and Neurological Impairments.* These

problems may mask giftedness or be used as an excuse not to address it. Examples are: learning disabilities, poor vision or hearing, speech problems or physical challenges. The disabled gifted are often not sought out.

Identification of those problems that cause any gifted child to underachieve is critical to the success of the program structured to ameliorate the situation. Early intervention at the grade school level is crucial if the child is to be saved from an academic history of failure.

The literature review continued to reveal many important points for consideration in advocating a program component to address underachievement in a gifted student. For example, the myth of elitism works against the creation of a program for these youngsters. "In our country, where equal opportunity is a national goal, the implication that one person has been given special advantages by nature — 'gifts' — leads people to complain of elitism" (Webb, Meckstroth, & Tolan, 1985, p. 206).

Gifted students mask complex, multiple issues concerning their underachieving. This can be helped through the intervention of a caring teacher. The bond so established has been a positive help to the underachieving bright child (Lethbridge, 1986). In addition, counseling underachieving gifted children helps them to improve their achievement records (Bingaman, 1988). In agreement with the counseling strategy is one of setting personal direction. If gifted students do not have direction, they will learn to hide their abilities. They will withdraw from the educational experience and may become disruptive in the social confines of the school room (Gleason, 1988). This would lead to disciplinary action and low achievement scores. Unfortunately, both mask the real issue and draw

attention to the result, not the cause.

Able children are not gifted in all subjects, but should still receive enrichment (Christianson, 1985), in a program tailored to meet their needs. If this is not done, the motivation one has for success may be seen through the veil of what is possible for them in their own minds. This is a type of self-fulfilling prophecy (Hannel, 1990). If gifted students underachieve because of emotional concerns, a program should be in place to redirect their behavior before it becomes self-destructive. An example of this would be when society gives mixed messages to the bright child by encouraging negative stereotypes (O'Connell-Ross, 1993) that impede academic achievement. One such stereotype would be that girls should not excel in math or science. Without counseling, this peer pressure (messages that tell the gifted youngster that it is not good to excel) is difficult for them to withstand (O'Connell-Ross, 1993).

Divergent cognitive styles are not recognized in gifted children. Those youngsters that are right-brained in orientation rarely get the positive strokes that the left-brained oriented students receive (Fouts & Young, 1993). This results in academic underachieving that can be reversed through an intervention component.

The literature continues to provide additional documentation on the problem of underachieving bright students, which point to the need of a program to address the problem. For instance, 10 to 20 percent of high school dropouts are in the gifted ability range (Jenkins-Friedman, Laffoon, & Tollefson, 1989), therefore a program addressing reasons for their inability to succeed might reduce the drop-out percentile. These drop-outs were underachieving gifted students who did not see a correlation between their efforts and the eventual outcomes of their

education (Jenkins-Friedman, 1989). A program component that addresses the relativity of school work to life outside academia would improve achievement.

Bright students often experience a mental overload when unrealistically high expectations are placed on them because of their giftedness (Adderholdt-Elliott, 1987). This is frequently expressed by their teachers when they are frustrated by the lack of schoolwork submitted or disciplinary problems that surface. Teachers forget that they are not only bright students, but still children! If this is permitted to occur, withdrawal leading to underachievement usually follows. Teachers also ask the student to be perfect without realizing that no one can be perfect. Teachers must encourage excellence, instead. When excellence is not attained, teachers should help the student in a self-evaluation that would become a positive learning experience.

Several topical areas have been recurring in this literature review. Failure/poor performance in math, reading, comprehension, penmanship and spelling are common in the underachieving gifted. This masks the need for challenge and direction causing the teacher to focus on the poor grades as a reason not as an outcome (Christianson et al., 1985). The underachieving program component can address this problem through teacher-to-teacher mentorship. Also, perfectionism instead of excellence may lead to the fear of failure and eventually, underachievement (Adderholdt-Elliott, 1987). Lastly, discipline problems can occur when the gifted are not challenged and therefore begin to underachieve due to boredom. The action is then placed on the bad behavior and not on the fact that the cause of the discipline problem is the lack of challenge (Webb, 1985). The underachievement is caused by the lack of accelerated or enriched, differentiated

studies. The poor grades or behavior is not the cause. If one knows the true reason to the problem, it can be solved. Punishing poor grades by giving more rote work or punishing the child for inappropriate behavior does not solve the true problem. Nevertheless that seems to be the primary strategy attempted.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was to develop a program to meet the cognitive and affective needs of the underachieving bright child in the fourth grade. It was expected that to address this goal accountably, the writer would need the support of the local power base. In this instance, that would include the guidance of the principal, approval of the parents, counseling services provided by the SAC, daily monitoring by the classroom teacher, cooperation of each student participant and mentoring support by the teacher of the gifted. It was the belief of this writer that each child should receive a personally appropriate education and not the one-size fits all variety. Therefore, it was this writer's responsibility to share that vision with all stakeholders identified above and motivate them to become active in the mission of educational reform.

Expected Outcomes

Expected outcomes at the end of the implementation period were expected to reflect these projected results. The first outcome addresses the issue of expanding the description of the enrichment program to acknowledge a component addressing underachieving bright students. The evaluation tool was the acceptance of the revised

description by the principal. The standard of achievement was that the principal would bring it to the next administrative meeting for approval.

The second outcome was expected to be an increase of time the classroom teachers devoted to differentiated studies. These lessons are valuable to the underachieving bright student. The evaluation tool was to be self-reports completed by the teachers and review of their plan books. The standard of achievement was that three out of four teachers would increase the time devoted to differentiated units from 10 minutes a day to 30 minutes a day.

The third outcome expected was that three of the four, fourth grade teachers would use alternate assignments daily to accommodate divergent learning styles. The evaluation tool would be a review of self-reports completed by the teachers, as well as a review of their plan books. The standard of achievement was that three out of four teachers would try optional strategies daily.

Measurement of Outcomes

The first of the outcomes (expanding the enrichment program's description) was addressed in steps. First, the principal at the implementation site accepted the revised program description. Next, he agreed to bring that proposal to an administrative meeting. It was expected that a vote of acceptance would follow. The positive result would be the official revision of the description of the Student Talent Enrichment Program (STEP) to include the STEP-UP component servicing the underachieving bright child.

The second of the outcomes dealt with increasing the time devoted to differentiated studies. A detailed analysis of the self-reports completed by participating teachers and reviews of their plan books would show that three, out of the four, teachers

increased the time devoted to differentiated units from 10 to 30 minutes a day.

Addressing styles of the divergent learner was the next outcome to be analyzed. The self-reports would be compared. An increase from one, to three out of four teacher-participants actually using optional strategies daily would be documented.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problems of the underachieving bright students in grade four were not being adequately served by an accountable program. Numerous solutions to the problems of the underachieving bright student were delineated in the literature review. Many were described as integral components to multilateral programs created to meet the unique affective and cognitive needs of these students. They were successful in diverse studies, and therefore appear to be accountable strategies for serious consideration in this practicum.

Program strategies to reverse underachieving behaviors in gifted students included curriculum activities based on the needs and interests of students. Compacting the required curriculum once competency was proven gave the student time for personal enrichment activities. Affective education to encourage positive values, attitudes and responsibilities were a cornerstone of good programs. Having a safe classroom environment would be essential. Most classrooms are physically safe, but this research requires emotional safety, the security to take risks without censure. (Whitmore cited in Delisle, 1990). The current research of both Bornstein (1988) and Supplee (1990) also agrees with Whitmore's conclusion. In their judgment, they believe that proven

components of successful programs for underachieving bright students should include an affective curriculum, differentiated studies, a focus upon study skills, in-service training of class-room teachers, parent involvement, and small group meetings at least once a week.

Schuler (1993) has proven that program intervention with underachieving gifted students should involve having the student become an active partner in his/her own learning. This included increasing the study options available and making modifications to the curriculum to increase the educational challenge to the student. The teacher must be prepared to balance thinking levels with skills development to decrease the frustration level of the student.

Most of these strategies were easily incorporated into the program this practicum created. However, it was difficult to secure an emotionally safe environment in the four participating classrooms. This was due to the individuals in charge and their relationship to the other youngsters in the room. It was also difficult to assure parent involvement. The students slated for program participation were from homes where most adults (or the single guardian) worked. Nevertheless, the component of parent involvement was encouraged because of its importance to the home-school relationship.

Student sharing sessions with personal growth journals have been documented as helping to improve achievement and feelings of self-worth (Galbraith & Schmitz, 1985). Reflective journalizing was incorporated into the pilot program for this writer believes it works in the school setting with the population selected.

The Springfield City School District of Ohio, (1991) found that Individualized Intervention Plans, special projects, mentoring group activities, and field trips increased achievement of students participating in a program for underachievers.

These last two strategies, although accountable and exciting, are too ambitious for this three month practicum. The time frame did not permit a bonding in the mentoring relationship. In most school districts, field trip buses are budgeted one year prior to need. Therefore, money was not available to incorporate field trips or even special projects into this pilot program.

In-service training of participating classroom teachers has been documented as helping to improve the performance of the underachieving gifted students (Lethbridge, 1986). Also, students and teachers participating in a behavior-modification program show a marked increase in achievement scores (Supplee, 1990). It is assumed that occurred because the students knew that their classroom teacher was part of their special enrichment program and therefore part of the team. The practicum did in-service the teachers with regard to giftedness and its paradoxical traits, but behavior-modification in its true form was not practical. Students and the teacher of the gifted, however, did work together on improving affective concerns thereby becoming their own enrichment team.

Remedial help and intervention strategies have improved the learning problems of gifted students (Starnes, 1998). Successful programs for the gifted underachiever set clear and defined limits that permit the student to have some control over learning. These programs address poor study skills and lack of organization (Rimm, 1985). Remediation of study and organizational skills would work in the school setting.

Enrichment Units, Learning Centers and Personal Development Activities have proven successful in working with underachieving gifted students (Christianson et al., 1985). By providing these activities with more of a locus of control for the underachieving gifted students over their own studies, there was expected to be a strong correlation with improved achievement (Jenkins-Friedman et al., 1989).

Enrichment Units, Learning Centers, and Personal Development Activities have proven successful in working with underachieving gifted students (Christianson et al., 1985). By providing these with more of a locus of control for the underachieving gifted students over their own studies, there will be a strong correlation with improved achievement (Jenkins-Friedman et al., 1989).

Although district resources are limited, many of these solution strategies were implemented. This writer became personally proactive in modeling the fact that education for each child is not elitist. It fulfills the promise of America.

Description of Selected Solutions

Permission to implement the following strategies was instantly granted by the principal of the school selected as the cite of the pilot project. He is a seasoned administrator with faith in the professionalism of his teaching staff. Although concerned about whether the necessary staff would volunteer for the project, he had only encouragement and good wishes for its implementation.

All teachers accepted the challenge of working to create a program for the underachieving bright student. This writer acknowledges the significant roll that classroom teachers played in the successful implementation of this practicum.

No problem occurred in the granting of permission by the parents to work with each youngster. Several parents were consulted prior to the beginning of the practicum and were anxious to have their children in the program.

Students enjoyed learning in a rich, active environment. These youngsters are precious natural resources. The American educational system must address their needs or risk negating the rights of all children to have a thorough, efficient, and personally

appropriate education.

This program was designed to not place financial burden upon the school system. All participants were volunteers and did not require honoraria. All supplies were provided by the school from stock that was normally in the system.

Solution strategies placed in STEP-UP (the name of this practicum's pilot program), were varied. They included each stakeholder with his/her own role, responsibility and accountability as delineated below.

The Classroom Teachers

The classroom teachers had the daily assignment of overseeing the STEP-UP program. They participated in two in-service workshops. The first provided them with direction to differentiate the curriculum (Lethbridge, 1986). The second incorporated activities to match student learning styles into the classroom curricula. They provided alternate assignment selections and created learning centers to provide the enrichment for their students (Christianson et al., 1985). They encouraged participating youngsters to improve themselves by accelerating their assigned lessons to gain enrichment time. This enabled them to exhibit a locus of control over the selection of learning centers (Schuler, 1993). Teachers' plan books and students' journals were monitored for attempts/comments at/about differentiation and varied learning styles. Both instruments were opened for periodic review. Both negative and positive constructive suggestions were shared.

The Student Assistant Counselor (SAC)

The SAC was ready to provide intervention strategies for the teachers and parents to employ (Starnes, 1988). These included behavior-modifications, mediation, and

motivational techniques.

The Parents

Parent involvement (Bornstein, 1988) developed a needed show of team work (Supplee, 1990) between home and school. This united front was an important factor to the students' success. Parent involvement included attendance at an Information Meeting early in the STEP-UP implementation (Appendix C). It included daily monitoring of the assigned homework (Appendix N). Monthly phone links occurred with the enrichment teacher. This writer's home phone number was made available to parents for their need to ask questions or share private information at any time.

The Enrichment Teacher

The enrichment teacher was responsible for facilitating the STEP-UP program. This included, but was not limited to:

1. Appraising the principal/verifier of the process of the practicum,
2. Formally identifying students that were to be serviced by this pilot program,
3. Seeking parental approval/support of this activity for their child and setting up required phone links, (see Appendix E for parent approval form)
4. Hosting a Parents' Information Meeting (Bornstein, 1988) (Appendix D)
5. Scheduling group/individual sessions into the time this writer was scheduled to work at the designated school. These sessions focused upon the affective domain to improve self-esteem (Supplee, 1990) and the cognitive domain to address weakness in study and organizational skills (Rimm, 1985 & Starnes, 1988),
6. Separate meetings with the SAC and the students' classroom teachers to

explain the program and enlist their support,

7. Scheduling and teaching two in-service workshops with the classroom teachers to direct their responsibilities to the students in their charge. The first meeting dealt with differentiation of the classwork and the second meeting with divergent learning styles,
8. Journalizing all meetings, class sessions, phone conferences, etc. for evaluation purposes, (Appendix I)
9. Developing a time-line and setting a completion date.

Report of Action Taken

After approval of the site supervisor, informal meetings with the four, fourth grade teachers and the eight parents of the selected students were scheduled. Once tentative endorsement of the program was received from all stakeholders, the children were asked if they would consider being part of a pilot project that was designed to make elementary education more personal. Since an immediate answer was not required of them, students were sent back to class to think about the pilot program and to discuss it at home.

The focus then turned to the participating teachers. Two workshops were prepared. They were scheduled on the date most convenient for the educators. One was on differentiated studies. The agenda appears in Appendix G. The other was on Learning Styles. The agenda appears in Appendix H. At both sessions, the teachers were asked to give self-reports on their knowledge of differentiated studies (Appendix A) and divergent learning styles (Appendix B). They were so involved, that both workshops went well over the planned ending time. One participant who had asked to leave 15 minutes early

remained about 40 minutes more because of interest! They were given journal pages on which they tracked differentiated studies (Appendix I).

Although the invitation for the parent information meeting stated that it would be held during the school day, only three of those invited did not attend. One had never been seen at school. In fact, no one can remember ever having seen the parent. Neither the father or mother have attended parent-teacher conferences or any other school function. This is spite of the fact that they have had children in the school for the last nine years. Another parent forgot to come, but did contact me one week later for the information and permitted the child to participate. The last sent a note refusing to permit the student to participate. This note arrived a week prior to the Parent Information Meeting. That was extremely sad for this writer.

Of the five families left, both parents attended the meeting. It was good to be able to share with the children's both parents. Even parents who were divorced, came together to find out about this pilot program. The agenda (Appendix D) was followed and a question exchange took place. The only question of note was from a father who stated that if teachers were to adapt their styles to each of their students, then those children would never learn to deal with different personalities. The response had to do with the fact that children do deal with different personalities each day on the playground and in the neighborhoods. In a learning situation such as school, the teaching professional must, in no way, block the goal of helping children to learn how to learn. It falls to the teacher to be certain that children learn in a safe environment. If they must adapt changes in their teaching style to match student learning styles, it must be done to meet that goal. Afterward, permission for student participation (Appendix E) was requested. All five sets of parents who attended, signed the permits.

STEP-UP was then set to begin with six youngsters. When the first class took place, a student questionnaire concerning their feelings about school was presented (Appendix F). All shared that school was too easy or dull. All seemed to be excited about piloting a new program. They wanted to learn in a more stimulating environment. They also liked the idea of working with the teacher to select study lessons.

Students were introduced to their log. On this they were to record their class and homework that was differentiated (Appendix N). They also received their Reflective Journals. These were explained and their importance to the project stressed. This would be a record of their success and failures or questions and comments that they wanted to share. Journals were reviewed each week and returned to the students.

By the third meeting, tutoring sessions were set up. Teacher preparation periods were set aside for private help sessions. These sessions ran the full spectrum of schooling. Some needed penmanship help, others needed reading for specific answers or information scanning skills. The most important sessions related to study and testing skills.

Classes began with warm-up games that also provided the students with concentration skills. They had to follow the action, pay attention to detail, or practice active listening. Homework logs were reviewed and private conferences were held (Appendix M). Each class had a specific purpose. Self-esteem and behavior modification to correct destructive attitudes toward school was a recurring theme. Self-motivation and organizational skills had two sessions each. Counseling about crooked thinking and positive self-talk took place. Study skills were addressed in three lessons. Communication, cooperation, and personal responsibility overlapped through many other sessions.

Phone links to the parents took place every four weeks. They reported positive

and/or negative input that had been culled from their child or from a review of their child's work. They made suggestions that could be used to help their child meet the educational goals set for him/her in STEP-UP. Parents had this writer's home phone number so contact could be made whenever needed.

Informal teacher meetings to assess program progress took place every two weeks. The Student Assistant Counselor was contacted on an as needed basis. The site supervisor was periodically appraised of all progress. The teacher of the gifted kept a professional journal of all events (Appendix J).

Whenever a teacher experienced a problem with a STEP-UP student it was shared with this writer and the student. The child was made aware that he/she was a responsible part of an educational team. Ownership of one's own education is an important value to be internalized. Education should never be what is done to the child, but rather what is presented so that the child has an interest and desire to learn. Only when a student becomes a stakeholder in the process would the student truly be part of it.

The most difficult roadblock to the implementation of this practicum was created by the weather. Classes were postponed or canceled three times (including the very first class). Momentum was slow to be established and difficult to maintain in the middle of a cold, icy winter.

At the conclusion of the practicum, parents were mailed evaluation surveys (Appendix K).

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Review of Problem

The problem addressed in this practicum report concerns underachieving bright students. The school district this writer services does not have a program in place that seeks to assist the underachieving bright student. The STEP-UP curriculum was created to address the educational, social, and emotional needs of these at-risk children. The fourth grade was selected to pilot this project.

Underachievement in highly able youngsters can be caused by a fear of failure, inability to take risks, a desire to be just one of the crowd, or learning disabilities. These are but a few of the documented causes researchers have discovered. These youngsters have had their lights of learning dimmed. It benefits the students' quality of life and society's overall well being for an intervention strategy to be placed within the enrichment program.

The district where this practicum was done is in a rural setting. The citizens are not wealthy. The school budget is lean. In fact, the new contract recently ratified by the local teachers' association has no pay increase for a majority of the staff. Under these conditions, a no-frills mentality has gripped the school administration. It is to this writer's

dismay that an accountable enrichment program, that provides an education for each child, is seen as a frill.

Review of Solution Strategies

Solution strategies utilized were diverse. Teachers were encouraged to keep their classrooms emotionally safe. The student-participants would then know that their teachers were truly on their side, working for their benefit. Teachers were in-serviced with a workshop addressing differentiation via curriculum compacting. This technique freed up the time needed for the teachers to develop enrichment activities and/or learning centers. These increased the educational challenge to the students. Students were also active partners in their own education. The curriculum activities prepared during implementation were based on the needs and interests of the children. They were encouraged to suggest alternate projects or assignments for their teachers to use as differentiated studies.

The teacher-participants were in-serviced to acquaint them with student learning styles. Their own teaching styles were also addressed. Teachers were encouraged to identify their students' personal learning styles. They tried to adapt differentiated lessons to accommodate the children's preferred styles. They were inspired to modify their own teaching styles to blend with their pupils' learning styles.

Students received affective education sessions. These were designed to instill positive attitudes toward school and personal responsibilities toward education. To track this growth, the student-participants were asked to complete reflective journals. Improved achievement and self-esteem were to be recorded. This activity was to help the students focus upon the educational changes they experienced and to reflect upon the meaning of

those changes.

Other strategies involved the parents' weekly review of the homework log and monthly input during phone links. Parents were also provided with this writer's home phone number to provide an emergency contact. Students were tutored by the enrichment teacher whenever they felt they needed clarification in an academic area. These sessions were on an appointment-only basis due to the limited time of the specialist and student. The Student Assistance Counselor was available to this pilot project to prepare individual intervention plans for students if, and when, the need arose.

All participants cooperated to form a tight team to work toward the educational successes of the underachieving bright children in the program.

Results

The following outcomes were projected at the commencement of the practicum implementation.

First outcome: The issue of expanding the description of the enrichment program to acknowledge a component addressing underachieving bright students was addressed. The standard of achievement was the acceptance of the statement by the principal for delivery to the next administration meeting.

Results: After successfully completing the practicum design, the following statement was accepted by the principal at the implementation site for presentation to the school administration.

> The [gifted enrichment] program in [this writer's] school district accepts the responsibility to meet the needs of highly able achieving students and highly able underachieving students.

This outcome was achieved as stated.

Second outcome: An increase of time the classroom teachers devoted to differentiated studies was addressed. The standard of achievement was that three out of four teachers would increase the time devoted to differentiated studies from 10 minutes to 30 minutes a day.

Results: Self-reports show that two out of four teachers increased their differentiated lessons over 100 percent each day. Yet, only one came close to reaching the 30 minutes a day that was expected. However, a review of the teachers' plan books showed that for all four participants, daily differentiation reached 35 minutes. Although specific lessons were highlighted as practicum implementation, other lessons could be identified as meeting the criteria for this outcome. Many of these lessons were directed to the total class population, thereby enabling many other youngsters to take control of their own education.

The self-reports documented a significant growth in these teachers' techniques and strategies in motivating the underachieving bright student. Three out of four participants who rated themselves somewhat knowledgeable in this area now rate themselves skillful. Planning for differentiated studies also showed a significant improvement. Before implementation, only one teacher planned differentiated study units for underachieving bright students. After implementation, all four teachers consistently plan differentiated lessons for their whole class. This outcome was achieved as stated.

Third outcome: It was expected that three of the four, fourth grade teachers would use alternate assignments daily to accommodate divergent learning styles. The standard achievement was that three out of four teachers would try optional strategies daily.

Results: A review of both teachers' plan books and self-reports show that three of

the four teachers did use daily alternate assignments to accommodate divergent learning styles. Growth in the theory of learning styles and the planning of alternate lessons that address students' learning styles showed in all four teacher-participants. Three of the four teachers consciously incorporate these alternate lessons into their daily classes by providing students with compatibility choices as to how assignments were to be completed. This outcome was achieved as stated.

Discussion

The positive results of the outcomes of this practicum suggest that with directed, loving guidance from professional caring teachers, and supportive parents, these underachieving bright students will endeavor to be successful in school. All stakeholders want a quality education provided for each child's needs. They want an exciting academic environment in which learning can occur.

O'Connell-Ross (1993) has written that "budget crises and opposition to programs has led to recent program cuts in many states . . . and have tended to fall unevenly on programs for gifted . . . students" (p. 18). The positive outcomes of this practicum prove that very little money is needed to redirect the education of the underachieving bright child. Differentiation and attention to learning styles will positively impact the education experience of all students. The only cost would be the reassignment of a staff member to provide mentoring strategies and motivation to the microsystem of the school community.

As children's cognitive process improves, so does their psychosocial process. Connell & Davis (1985), Whitmore (1986), and Gleason (1988) agree that affective conflicts and boring academic environments intertwine. Divergent styles of teaching that

compliment the learning styles of students would positively impact on the self-esteem and self-worth of the underachieving bright child. Webb et al. (1985) shares that "the common person has the right to become uncommon according to his ability" (p. 206). Effectively, this concept does not transfer to the highly able child. If that child is an underachieving youngster, he is labeled as lazy. He/she becomes the forgotten child in the educational community. The child cannot be helped, for the true problem is never addressed (Gleason, 1988). If that child is achieving, the youngster is labeled as gifted and is forgotten within the bureaucracy of the educational community. Enough blessings have already been bestowed, upon that student. The student needs no challenging curriculum or acceleration. The child can be the leader in cooperative groupings, replace monthly bulletin boards, help tutor slower students, or just get out a book to read. Webb et al. (1985) views this lack of educational help as society's backlash. Society perceives help for the gifted child as elitism.

The fact that differentiation and study options related to divergent learning styles not only help the achieving and underachieving bright child, but also the general school population, erases this elitist mind-set. This practicum shows a secondary outcome of also servicing total classes with appropriate, individualized education. Bright or slow-paced, achieving or underachieving, the professional educator must remember that students are still children. To keep them in love with learning — to have learning become a life-long endeavor — strategies of learning styles and differentiation must become routinely included in lesson planning. The outcomes show that with in-servicing, mentoring, and coaching, much can be accomplished with very little financial backing. However, encouragement from the school administration is a necessary factor for success. The positive results gave this district educators willing and eager to hone their

teaching skills. It gave the district students encouraged to make their own education viable by seizing some control over it. It gave the district parents willing to complete the educational team. The acceptance of responsibility toward educational reform was accepted by all the stakeholders.

Teachers acted as encouragers as the practicum unfolded. At the end of the first week of implementation, one teacher shared that three activities related to differentiation had already been attempted. All were from the in-service workshops. This same professional told me that when this practicum was discussed at home, the realization that this participant had not been this excited about teaching in a very long time became evident. In fact, possible alternate or differentiated activities came in dreams. When awake, they were transcribed onto note paper left on the night table. A two-page list had been completed by the second week of the practicum.

Another participating teacher presented this writer with a gold-plated, maple leaf pin. This represents a symbol of success and accomplishment in the completion of one's enterprises. The gift was prior to classroom implementation. It served as a great encourager.

One teacher came to this writer extremely excited about the results of the differentiated lessons that occurred in class. One student prepared an experiment on electricity to replace a dittoed worksheet. The experiment went well. The other students were eager to learn more. This resulted in the young scientist's offer to prepare a second experiment relating to magnetism.

Two teachers reported changes in students' behavior within the first five weeks of implementation. The students both took more time with their assignments, were thoughtful, and produced neater work. Both youngsters improved their grades; one of

them received straight As on the report card of that marking period.

Teachers were satisfied with the workshops and felt prepared to implement STEP-UP. They conscientiously tried to incorporate a variety of choices for their students' daily lessons. They reported being more mindful of the children's different learning styles. They felt it was important to address learning styles because they believed some students would not learn if they could not relate to the presentation of the material.

Differentiating lessons were difficult for the teacher at the beginning of implementation, but grew easier as it progressed. They found it a personal learning process of great value. The only negative comment reported was that teachers now had other papers or projects to assess. Therefore, they had to evaluate more specifically.

One parent saw the child's improvement in self-esteem within the first month. All parents liked the personal responsibility allocated to their children. Their children all spoke highly of their involvement. Whether or not this was a manifestation of a Hawthorne Effect is unknown. By the end of the second month, parents saw that their children (who just coasted in school previously) were now consistently challenged. The children all appreciated the alternate activities and seemed more focused.

Five of the six parents returned the final evaluation survey. These final evaluations were rather thoughtful. They wrote that their youngsters were challenged, thrilled, empowered, and content. Only one parent responded with the term *indifferent.* This parent wondered if their young student had already been set in conventional teaching methods. A suggestion for frequent communication with both the classroom and STEP-UP teachers was received. Another student, as reported by the parent, took advantage of the situation by lying to get out of the alternate work. The child told different stories to the parent, classroom teacher, and to this writer, but was caught in the

deceit. The parent reported that this child could not be trusted to work independently. Had this been brought out earlier in the practicum, the student assistance counselor would have been consulted to assess the truth of the statement and to specify a course of action to be taken.

On a more positive note, other parents reported that their children enjoyed the program, complained less about being bored at school, were anxious to share the differentiated work at home, and looked forward to school for the first time. One parent wrote that the child felt that a window of opportunity was now opened and fear had no place in education. Asking for help or suggesting study ideas were now being done regularly. The impact of STEP-UP to reading was also favorably noted by the parents. This was a welcomed, although unexpected outcome.

Students reported enjoying the alternate lessons over worksheets. They felt it was a chance to develop and use their own ideas. They wanted the program to continue with frequent sessions each week. They shared that, learning difficult material was easier now because learning had become fun and less of a bore in class. In fact, this writer was thanked by the children for doing this practicum with them. One student wrote about the freedom that was felt when selecting, creating, and sharing projects. Students found that their classroom teachers were slow to offer choices at the beginning and shared that change to their education was slow in coming. In their eagerness, they forgot that their teachers were also trying out new techniques. The concept excited them from the start and continued to excite four of the six participants through the final days of implementation.

Currently STEP-UP is continuing until the end of the school term as the children requested. Unfortunately, more class periods were not able to be incorporated into the

school week.

Unanticipated Outcomes

Journaling helped to document the many unanticipated outcomes over the three month implementation of Practicum I. The first day the students were to come, the STEP-UP class addressing underachieving bright youngsters was canceled due to an ice storm. To remain on schedule, classes the next day were amended to give time for a meeting. During afternoon bus duty that same day, at the implementation site, one of the STEP-UP students who had never smiled in 1 1/2 years of interaction with this writer, waved and smiled as the bus departed.

Another event was that the reflective journals assigned to students were not well received. Encouragement, award stickers and positive feedback just could not stimulate a written connection between the children or this writer. Unless monitored daily, nothing was written.

One of the teacher-participants experienced a most difficult trial. Three months into the implementation of Practicum I, the teacher's mother became quite ill. This mom was placed on a respirator. The teacher subsequently lost many school days. Many of those attended were of the come late, leave early variety. Substitute teachers were not able to achieve the skills needed to differentiate lessons or incorporate divergent learning styles in the daily curricula. Five weeks later, the teacher's mother passed away. It was really only the last four weeks that STEP-UP came into focus for this teacher and student. This professional truly tired to make an impact in STEP-UP. The sadness in the teacher's personal loss was shared by all.

Totally unprepared for the next unexpected outcome, this writer found some personal fear when faced with the first and second phone links to parents. Unsure of their

constructive evaluations the phone contacts were postponed for several days. It is most difficult to reach out a hand of fellowship. Teachers must become used to this mode of communication for good or bad news. Administrators must foresee this reluctantness and provide a private secure area in which safe, friendly contact could be made. Experience can reshape mind sets. Phoning parents monthly should be a routine part of a teacher's total responsibilities.

Weather again, became an unexpected event. School closed early due to an impending snow storm and was canceled on another day after a 2-hour delay. This occurred at the mid point of the practicum. Since all classes were now backed-up, STEP-UP was unable to be rescheduled.

A parent provided a truly unexpected outcome. Because of the parent information meeting and changes in the schooling methods of her child, this mom was adapting her parenting style. She left her evening job for a day position to enable her to monitor the homework her child needed to do.

The ninth meeting of STEP-UP was also canceled due to an ice storm. Winter in the mountains made it a challenge to maintain momentum of the students' excitement toward this program.

Summation

All outcomes of this Practicum I (addressing underachieving bright students in the fourth grade) were achieved. The strategies culled from the works of respected researchers in the field of gifted education seemed to be successful. The only one that did not mature was the reflective journals kept by the students.

The principal at the site was encouraged by the results. He accepted the statement

to expand the definition of the gifted program to included underachieving bright students.

Teachers learned more about differentiating their curriculum and addressing divergent learning styles. Their classroom efforts in learning these skills made for exciting experiences for them.

Parents showed their willingness to monitor this new concept and keep in close contact with their child's classroom teacher and the STEP-UP teacher.

The student assistance counselor was available to help answer questions or identify strategies for use with the students.

The students learned that they can and should take responsibility for their own education. The more they input ideas into their class work, the more enjoyable it would be. They learned that school does not have to be boring, but would be exciting if each participated at his/her own level of capability.

Recommendations

This project can be a significant benefit to other students and teachers in most districts. The monitoring of teachers on a personal, yet professional basis, would be an asset as schools are restructured and reformed. It is believed that this program can be replicated in other districts where underachieving bright students reside. Growth in the cognitive and affective domains occur whenever the student feels valued and is respected. Plans to continue this program should address:

1. Extending the time frame beyond three months to enable teachers and students to internalize their attitudes and hone their skills within the area of differentiation and learning styles. A more dramatic outcome would then be perceived and measured.
2. Teachers should have follow-up in-service workshops where skills that are directly

taught can be practiced.

3. Teachers should be mentored on a daily basis. This should incorporate constructive criticism and much encouragement.

Dissemination

The results will be shared with colleagues at the implementation site during the end-of-term professional day. Their reactions will be noted.

The practicum design will be shared during next term's teacher-to-teacher training sessions. This would increase the knowledge base of the teachers so that quality sharing can occur. This can be the beginning of a strong local network.

The STEP-UP program is continuing well past its three month trial. STEP-UP has been placed in a proposal that requests its continued implementation at two sites next term. To date, no administrative determination has been received.

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APPENDIX A

SELF-REPORT: DIFFERENTIATED STUDIES

Self Report: Differentiated Studies

Administration Dates: _____ _____

Please do not record your name.

1. Are you aware of the techniques involved in differentiating a study unit? _____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

2. Do you consider each child's knowledge level when differentiating a unit? _____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

3. How often each week do you provide differentiated units for your students? _____ 0 - 3 _____ 4 - 7 _____ More than 7

4. How many minutes per day do students work on differentiated units? _____ 0 - 5 _____ 6 - 10 _____ More than 10

5. Do you ever plan differentiated study units specifically for the underachieving bright student? _____ Yes _____ No

6. Do you view differentiated studies as a good strategy to motivate the underachieving bright student? _____ Yes _____ No

General Comments:

APPENDIX B

SELF-REPORT: DIVERGENT LEARNING STYLES

Self-Report: Divergent Learning Styles

Administration Dates: _____ _____

Please do not record your name.

1. Are you aware of the Theory of Learning Styles? _____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

2. Do you consciously incorporate learning preference styles into your classroom assignments? _____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

3. Do you give students compatibility choices concerning how they may complete an assignment? _____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

4. Do you ever plan alternate lessons for the underachieving bright child which address a divergent learning style? _____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

5. Have you ever changed your teaching style to match a student's learning style? _____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

6. How often each week do you plan for alternate lessons to accommodate learning styles? _____ 0 - 3 _____ 4 - 7 _____ More

General Comments:

APPENDIX C

INVITATION TO PARENTS

_____, 199_

Dear_____ ,

Permission has been granted for the pilot program, STEP-UP to begin in 199__. This class has been designed to meet the needs of bright youngsters not currently enrolled in any other school enrichment activity.

Your fourth grade child _____, has been nominated for consideration.

You are invited to attend an information meeting for parents on _____, _____, 199_ at ___ o'clock in Room ___ of the _____ School. At its conclusion, permission to include your child in STEP-UP will be requested.

Please R.S.V.P. to _____ by _____, 199_. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Eicher

Teacher

APPENDIX D

AGENDA: PARENTS' MEETING

Parents' Meeting Agenda

Greetings

Introduction of self

Introduction of parents

Purpose of STEP-UP

- Meet the needs of bright children not currently in an enrichment program.

Teacher Qualifications

- Teaching 21 years/15 years in gifted education
- M. Ed. (Curriculum and Instruction, completed 1991)
- Nova - Ed. D. (Curriculum Development and Systemic Change, candidate)

Design of STEP-UP (3 mo.)

- Classroom teacher - daily differentiation/learning styles
- SAC
- Parent
- Enrichment Teacher - weekly classes
  - Topics: Affective Skills
    Study Skills
    Journalizing

Permission

APPENDIX E

PARENT PERMISSION FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Permission for Student Participation

_____, 199_

I grant permission for _____ in grade 4, to participate in the three month implementation of the pilot program STEP-UP. I understand that I will be required to monitor the process and to be available for phone consultation as necessary.

_____

Parent or Guardian

_____

Date

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRE: STUDENTS' FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL

Questionnaire: Students' Feelings About School

_____ _____

My impressions of school are . . .

What I like most about school is . . .

What I like least about school is . . .

I feel the work I study is _____ (adjective) because . . .

(Examples: enjoyable, fun, boring, easy, hard, interesting)

I feel good about teachers when . . .

I feel badly about teachers when . . .

APPENDIX G

AGENDA FOR TEACHERS' WORKSHOP
DIFFERENTIATED STUDIES

Differentiated Studies

I. Differentiated Studies

A. Definition

1. Virgil Ward (1961)
2. Kaplan (1974)
3. Gallagher (1975)
4. U. S. Office of Education (1976)
5. Renzulli (1977)

B. Qualitatively Unique

1. Not, more work
2. Enhance special potential of each child

C. Characteristics of the underachieving bright student that necessitates differentiated studies

1. Advanced verbal expression
2. Possesses a large body of knowledge above age-mates
3. Quick mastery of academics when interested
4. Asks questions/interest in many things
5. Understands academics, even if not actively listening
6. May bore easily/gets side-tracked
7. Self-critical/lacks risk-taking skills
8. Works independently
9. Self-assertive/aggressive

10. Displays curiosity about ideas that may run parallel with the curricula
11. Acute sense of humor often produces trouble
12. May dominate instead of lead

II. Strategies to differentiation
   A. Independent study/importance of discovery
   B. Mentorships
   C. Emphasis on intellectual activity/open-mindedness
   D. Active part in problem solving
   E. Raw data is encouraged; survey/charting to develop conclusions
   F. Real/possible situations should be structured
   G. Play to the student's interest
   H. Create new information or objects
   I. Provide study in depth/complexity
   J. Learner has control of study options/choices/variety
   K. HOTS/upper level of Bloom's Taxonomy
   L. Student decides how to share learning
   M. Self-evaluations/constructive criticisms

III. Discussion: Questions/Answers

APPENDIX H

AGENDA FOR TEACHERS' WORKSHOP

Learning Styles Workshop

I. Introduction
   A. Two years ago: In-service Workshop
      Learning and Teaching Styles: The Gregoric Mind Style Approach (A.Gregoric)[1]
   B. Review concepts from workshop notes
II. Other theories
   A. 4-mation (formation)[1]
   B. Learning Styles Inventory (Renzulli & Smith)[1]
   C. Learning Styles Model (R. Dunn & K. Dunn)[1]
   D. Multi-intelligences (H. Gardner)[1]
   E. Learning Style Inventory (D. Kolb & I. Rubin)[1]
   F. Myers Briggs Type (I. B. Myers)[1]
   G. Planning Styles (G. Gappert)[1]
   H. Hemisphere Specialization (J. Bogen)[1]
   I. Hemisphericity (D. Kolb & I. Rubin)[1]
III. Cognitive Styles Inventory (T. Craney)[1]
   A. Presentation
   B. Administration
   C. Discussion of results
IV. Application to Differentiated Studies
   A. Taylor the assignment to the learning style
   B. Provide several options
   C. Adapt your teaching style to reach the student

[1] Note. Additional information on these resources is available from the author.

APPENDIX I

JOURNAL FORMAT: DIFFERENTIATED STUDIES

Journal Format: Differentiated Studies

Date	Academic Subject	Student	General Plan	Differentiated Plan

APPENDIX J

PRACTICUM I: PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL SAMPLE

Practicum I: Professional Journal Sample

Date	Description of Activity	Implication	Application

APPENDIX K

PARENTS' EVALUATION SURVEY

Parents' Evaluation Survey

Please do not sign your name:

1. Did your child enjoy the STEP-UP Program? _____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

2. Were educational choices made available in class during STEP-UP? _____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

3. Was the differentiated work more challenging? _____ Yes _____ Somewhat _____ No

4. Select an adjective that best expresses your child's attitude about being in STEP-UP. _____

5. Can you identify any changes in your child's behavior or attitude toward school or his/her education that seem to result from participation in STEP-UP? Please explain below.

6. Please share any other comment/concerns about this pilot program.

Thank You.

APPENDIX L

PERMISSION TO USE CREATIVE TEACHING PRESS, INC. MATERIALS

Creative Teaching Press, Inc.

May 15, 1995

Josephine Eicher
634 Reba Rd.
Landing, NJ 07850

Dear Josephine,

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You may reprint CTP 6031 and CTP 6037 in your paper, giving them proper credit on the page itself or in the bibliography.

Good luck and thank you for your interest in Creative Teaching Press publications.

Sincerely,

Luella Connelly

Luella Connelly
Publisher

APPENDIX N

CONFERENCE RECORD

Conference Record

Student Name _____

Date	Selection	Focus	Goal	Comments

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APPENDIX O

HOMEWORK LOG

Homework Log

Week of _____ **Name** _____

Area of Study	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Materials Needed					

79 _____ _____ _____ _____ 80

Parent Signature **Parent Signature** **Parent Signature** **Parent Signature** **Parent Signature**

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